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ABSTRACT

This teacher's guide presents material for a unit on introduction to fashion buying. Content focuses on information sources, retail store types, the responsibilities of a buyer, and the qualifications of a buyer. The guide contains 4 objectives, 4 group learning activities keyed to the objectives, 17 transparency masters with dialogue for each, and 3 alternate group activities. A posttest with answers completes the unit. (KC)

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FASHION BUYING SERIES

TEACHER EDITION

INTRODUCTION TO FASHION BUYING

ED311292

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OKLAHOMA CIMC

Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Stillwater, Oklahoma

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Competency: Fashion Buying I

Objectives:

A List various information sources.

B List various retail store types.

C Demonstrate understanding of the responsibilities of a buyer.

D List the qualifications of a buyer.

I GROUP LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR OBJECTIVES A, B,C, AND D

This set of learning experiences involves a group presentation followed by some application exercises. The focal points of the lesson are:

1. Discussing various information sources available to the buyer.
2. Discussing various retail store types.
3. Listing the responsibilities of a buyer.
4. Listing the qualifications of a buyer.

Transparency masters, notes below, and exercises are included for your use.

Transparency Number		Message
A	1	Begin by explaining that it is critical for the buyer to use as many components of internal information as possible when making decisions. There are never "too many" sources of information. The buyer should also strive to create new methods of internal information geared specifically for their store. It is also necessary to continually update the internal records to be accurate in the assessment of their store's clientele.

(continued)

Transparency Number	Message
2	Remind the students that the sources listed in this lap are not all-inclusive. Buyers must always be looking for new sources of outside merchandise, trade and business publications and research to most accurately make decisions.
3	Explain that independently owned stores are "mom and pop" types of specialty stores and give examples of some local stores with which the students can identify. Then ask the students to name some. Remind them that the store carries a specific merchandise mix catered to a specific market.
4	Now relate to the students examples of "specialty" stores that are regional or national chains. Ask them to name some as well.
5	Discuss the fact that department stores are ones that carry "specialty" merchandise, separated by "departments", all under one roof. These stores may carry both hard and soft lines or a deep and wide selection of soft line merchandise. Centralized department stores base all of their operations out of a central location.
6	Decentralized department stores base their buying function out of a central buying office for the major selection. However, each store within a decentralized store will have its own buyers to select from the predetermined merchandise selection.
7	Discount stores may operate either with a centralized or decentralized buying procedure but the main characteristic is low mark-up.

Transparency Number	Message
8	While covering each responsibility listed, it is important to relate each to the other. Fashion buying is a process and should be considered as such. Each facet of the buyers responsibility blends directly or indirectly with the other and cannot be thought of separately. Share examples of how the buyer might utilize this process using a particular product.
9	Fashion buying requires a strong personality with a great deal of dedication. Discuss the need for further education should the career of fashion buying be pursued. Most independently owned mom and pop stores will not require an advanced degree, but for those looking for a larger career opportunity, additional education is essential.
10	Discuss the need for a buyer to be able to problem-solve and work with numbers. although the basic mathematic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are used, the buyer must understand appropriate formulas and how they affect profit.
11	Remind the student that both oral and written communication are critical to success as a buyer. A buyer must be able to get their message across to a broad group of people.
12	Discuss the importance of in-depth product knowledge. When going to market, the buyer must be aware of content, construction, care, etc. before making a purchase.
13	Give the students an example of objective reasoning. Discuss how their personal tastes must be set aside and the wants and needs of their customers must come first.

Transparency Number	Message
14	Talk about the hours that fashion retailers are open in your community. Remind the students that the stores are open most holidays, evenings, and weekends. The buyer's job, too, requires long hours at market.
15	Fashion, by its very nature, requires leadership to be profitable. The qualities inherent in leadership such as decision-making and risk-taking are essential. Discuss other leadership qualities and how they enhance a buyers qualifications.
16	Once again, fashion's nature requires strict attention to appearance. As a fashion buyer, one must always appear in the image the store presents. Ask the students what they might perceive if a fashion buyer appeared slovenly and unkept.
17	Fashion is change--fast change. Anyone who is rigid and does not adapt easily to change would have difficulty as a fashion buyer. At the last minute ads are changed, orders are changed, etc. and the fashion buyer must be able to be flexible and creative in their ability to adapt.

II ALTERNATE GROUP ACTIVITIES

A Break the class into two main groups. Give each main group the name of a locally owned store that is popular with the students. Now divide each main group into two groups. One will be labeled "internal information" and the other "external information. The students are to discuss how they would go about finding and using the information to make buying decisions. Example: Group 1 is assigned "Susie's Specialty Store". The internal group would discuss specific methods of interviewing customers, developing questionnaires, etc. to determine their wants and needs. Group 2 would discuss where they would look for external information and how they would utilize this in their decision-making.

B List on the board, each type of retail store as a major heading. Have the students brainstorm about local or regional stores that fall under that classification.

Or, assign a group to each main store type. Have the students make a telephone interview with a buyer who works for that type of store and share it with the class.

C Take the "Is Fashion Buying For You? test.

Internal Sources of Information

1. Past Sales

2. Consumer Research
   a. Interviews
   b. Questionnaires
   c. Consumer Panels
   d. Observation
   e. Sales Personnel

Transparency 1

External Sources of Information

1. Trade Publications

2. Vendor Information

3. Resident Buying Offices

Transparency 2

Specialty Stores

Independently Owned—Owner or manager performs all buying functions

Transparency 3

Specialty Stores

Chain Store — Buying and operating functions controlled from a central office.

Department Store

Centralized — One group of centralized managers controls buying for the stores in the organization.

Department Store

Decentralized — Central buyer purchases a large merchandise mix with a wide variety of customers in mind. Individual stores within the chain then select from that, offering what most fits their needs.

Discount Stores

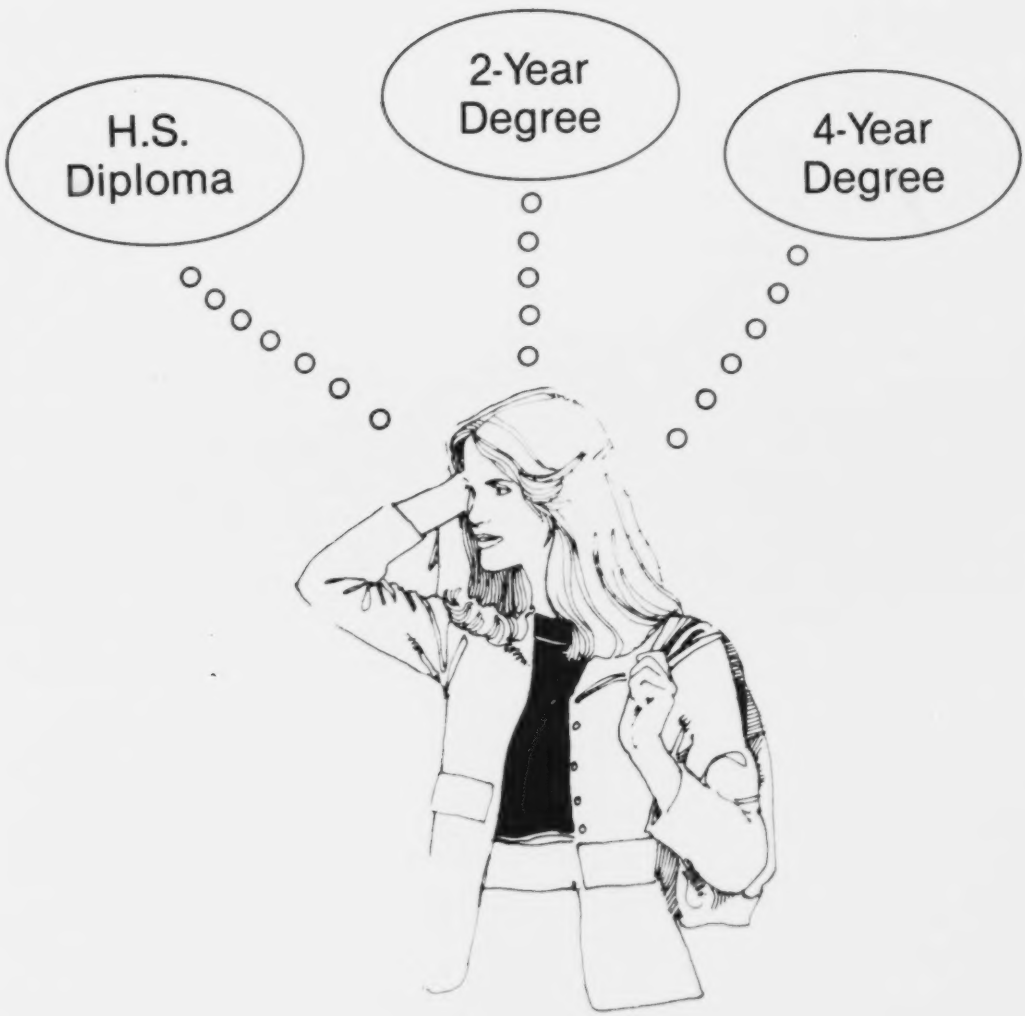
1. High turn-over rate
2. Low mark-ups
3. Self service

Transparency 7

Responsibilities of A Buyer

1. Purchasing
2. Advertising
3. Merchandise Pricing
4. Relationship with Sales Force
5. Merchandising

Education



Ability to Analyze

Transparency 10

Ability to Communicate

Transparency 11

Product Knowledge

What is the fiber content?
How is this cared for?
What dyes or screen-print method was used?
Does this run true to size?
What weave was used?

Buyers must be able to verify all the questions they have by their own experience with textiles and design.

Transparency 12

Ability to be Objective

NO

Gee, I really would like this for the party I'm going to. I think I'll buy some for the store so I can make sure I get one!

YES

I really like this necklace but I don't think it is for our customers. I'm going to pass on this one.

Dedication

"Buyers must be willing to work holidays, weekends, and long hours."

Leadership

"Well, there's a good chance this is the perfect line for my customers. It's a little trendy, but I think we're ready for that. I'm going to take a chance, let's write an order for it."

Transparency 15

Personal Appearance

Women	Men
Hair	Hair
Make-up	Aftershave
Perfume	Beard or Mustache
Jewelry	Shoes or Boots
Hemline	Pants (length)
Shoes	
Fingernails	
Overall Fit & Style	Overall Fit and Style

Dress in the image that the store represents

Flexibility

"You mean the merchandise won't be delivered in time for the ad? I guess I'll just have to substitute it with another item."

POSTTEST

Circle the best answer(s) for each question.

OBJECTIVE A

1. Internal sources of information include all but one of the following:

   a. interviews

   b. trade journals

   c. questionnaires

   d. consumer panels

2. Information which is not directly related to the store, but comes from outside resources is called an _____ _____.

3. Being a member of this type of organization can help the buyer keep abreast of developing trends, good buys and customer preferences.

   a. Resident Buying Office

   b. Manufacturer's Advocacy Groups

   c. International Import, Inc.

   d. Direct Sales Associates

4. Sources which affect a buyers ability to make the best decisions for their store include:

   a. trade publication information

   b. vendor information

   c. producer's price sheets

   d. all of the above

   e. both a and b

OBJECTIVE B

5. This type of store is generally owned and operated by a member of the community and the manager usually performs all the buying functions.

   a. discount store

   b. decentralized store

   c. independently owned store

6. Discount stores generally have all the following characteristics EXCEPT ONE:

   a. a high turnover rate

   b. a high mark-up

   c. merchandise which serves wide customer preferences

   d. a large merchandise mix

OBJECTIVE C

7. This responsibility of a buyer includes seeking merchandise resources, selecting appropriate merchandise and making sure the merchandise is delivered in a timely fashion.

   a. merchandising

   b. advertising

   c. pricing

   d. purchasing

8. The person usually most qualified to make advertising decisions is the _____.

9. A buyers relationship with the sales force is important because of all BUT ONE of these reasons.

10. All of the following are general responsibilities of the buyer EXCEPT ONE:

    a. operating the cash register

    b. advertising

    c. merchandise pricing

    d. merchandising

OBJECTIVE D

11. In all but independently owned specialty stores, this educational requirement is a must:

    a. only a high school diploma

    b. a two-year college degree

    c. a four-year college degree

    d. both b and c

12. Product knowledge enables the buyer to make the best purchasing decisions for their store with regards to:

    a. store image

    b. pricing

    c. quality

    d. all of the above

13. The ability to make decisions without involving personal feelings to intrude is called the _____ _____ _____ _____.

14. Because fashion buying requires long, unscheduled hours involving holidays and weekends, a buyer must be:

    a. fashionable in appearance

    b. educated

    c. flexible

    d. able to communicate

PRETEST KEY
(Before You Begin)

OBJECTIVE A

1. Describe the following information sources a buyer would use to make merchandise decisions.

   a. Internal sources -- information derived from within the store.

   b. External sources -- information which is not directly related to the store, but come from outside resources.

2. Discuss at least three types of consumer research, originated within the store, that a buyer might use to make merchandise selections.

   Past sales--enables the buyer to understand trends in fashion, buying patterns, economic considerations, etc.

   Interviews--personal questioning of customers to understand wants and needs.

   Questionnaires--lists and questions that your customer can answer to help the buyer determine preferences.

   Observation--simply observing the customers behavior.

   Customer panels--a group of typical customers put together to give advice, guidance and input into buying decisions.

   Sales personnel--asking the sales personnel their opinions with regards to their close association with the customer.

3. What kind of questions might a buyer ask a manufacturer's sales representative to find out about how to best meet their customers merchandise wants and needs.

   a. What types are being accepted in my area?
   b. What other stores have purchased the merchandise?
   c. How are the sales records so far on this merchandise?

4. Discuss why the use of <u>both</u> internal and external sources of information are critical to a buyer.

In order to make the most appropriate selection of merchandise for the store's need, both sources of information are critical.

PRETEST KEY (Cont'd)

OBJECTIVE B

5. List three general retail store types.

   a. Specialty stores
   b. Department stores
   c. Discount stores

6. What is the difference between centralized and decentralized buying operations?

   A centralized buying operation requires one group of central managers to control the whole operation. In decentralized stores, a central buyer purchases a large merchandise mix and individual store buyers make their selections from that predetermined mix.

OBJECTIVE C

7. List some of the tasks a buyer faces in the process of purchasing merchandise.

   a. Planning for the purchase
   b. Seeking merchandise resources
   c. Selecting appropriate merchandise
   d. Assuring delivery of the merchandise to the store.

8. Why is the buyer usually most qualified to make advertising decisions?

   It is the buyer who has scouted the market with regards to the specific needs of their customers.

9. Discuss why a strong relationship with the sales force is essential for the buyer.

   The sales personnel should be knowledgeable about incoming merchandise and for what purpose it was purchased. They should also be looked upon as a source of customer information.

10. Why should buyers be strongly involved with merchandising their selections on the sales floor?

    Buyers make merchandise selections which are intended to serve their customer's needs and the merchandise should be arranged in such a way as to help the customer easily meet those needs.

PRETEST KEY Cont'd)

OBJECTIVE D

11. Name three qualifications of a buyer?

    a. education
    b. enthusiasm
    c. ability to analyze
    d. ability to communicate
    e. product knowledge
    f. ability to be objective
    g. dedication
    h. leadership
    i. appearance
    j. flexibility

12. Why must a buyer have ability to be objective?

    Personal feelings cannot intrude on buying decisions.

13. What is the ability to analyze?

    The ability to analyze sales results, fashion trends, customer analysis, etc. and apply them to the store on a constant basis.

POSTTEST KEY

OBJECTIVE A

1. b (trade journals)
2. external source
3. a (resident buying office)
4. e (both trade publication and vendor information)

OBJECTIVE B

5. c (independently owned)
6. b (a high mark-up)

OBJECTIVE C

7. d (purchasing)
8. buyer
9. c (to approve pricing of merchandise)
10. a (operating the cash register)

OBJECTIVE D

11. d (both a two and four year college degree)
12. d (all of the above: store image, pricing and quality)
13. ability to be objective
14. c (flexible)